

# codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD  
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ORGANIZATION



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CX 2/20

CL 2005/6-EXEC  
February 2005

TO:	Codex Contact Points Interested International Organizations
FROM:	Secretary, Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme FAO, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00100 Rome, Italy
SUBJECT:	<b>REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON THE NEED FOR A CODEX STANDARD FOR SOY SAUCE</b>
DEADLINE:	<b>30 APRIL 2005</b>
COMMENTS:	<b>To:</b> Secretary, Codex Alimentarius Commission, Joint FAO/WHO Foods Standards Programme, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla 00100 Rome, Italy Fax No.: 39.06.5705.4593 E-Mail: <a href="mailto:codex@fao.org">codex@fao.org</a> (preferably)

## BACKGROUND

### CODEx COMMITTEE ON PROCESSED FRUITS AND VEGETABLES<sup>1</sup>

#### Proposed draft Codex Standard for Soy Sauce

1. The 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables (September 2004) considered a proposed draft Codex Standard for Soy Sauce and had an exchange of views on the need to have a Codex Standard for such product as follows:
2. The Committee noted that the elaboration of a Codex Standard for Soy Sauce was better covered by the Terms of Reference of the Codex Committee on Cereals, Pulses, and Legumes, namely: "*to elaborate worldwide standards for cereals, pulses, and legumes and their products*". The Committee acknowledged that this Committee had been adjourned *sine die* but it was currently working by correspondence on the finalization of the draft Codex Standard for Instant Noodles.
3. Some delegations were of the view that standardization of soy sauce was not justified in the light of the Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities. Other delegations were of the opinion that the work already done in the Committee should not be lost and that consideration of the need for a Standard for Soy Sauce and its further development should be given in the Codex Committee on Cereals, Pulses, and Legumes.
4. The Committee agreed to discontinue work on the standardization of soy sauce. In taking this decision, it agreed to recommend the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission to entrust this work to the Codex Committee on Cereals, Pulses, and Legumes on the understanding that, before proceeding further with the elaboration of the Standard, this Committee should have a full discussion on the need for a Codex Standard for Soy Sauce in the light of the Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities.

<sup>1</sup> ALINORM 05/28/27, paras. 85 - 87.

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE<sup>2</sup>**

5. The 55<sup>th</sup> Session of the Executive Committee (February 2005) noted the decision of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables (September 2004) to discontinue work on the standardization of soy sauce while recommending the Executive Committee to entrust this work to the Codex Committee on Cereals, Pulses and Legumes (CCCPL) on the understanding that, before proceeding further with the elaboration of the Standard, the CCCPL should have a full discussion on the need for a Codex Standard for Soy Sauce in the light of the Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities.

6. The Executive Committee acknowledged that CCCPL had been adjourned *sine die* although it was currently working by correspondence on the finalization of the draft Codex Standard for Instant Noodles. It also noted the decision of the 27<sup>th</sup> Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (July 2004) to entrust the initial elaboration of similar standards on fermented soybean paste (doenjang) and hot pepper fermented soybean paste (gochujang) to the Coordinating Committee for Asia and if required, finalization by the Codex Committee on Cereals, Pulses and Legumes<sup>3</sup>.

7. The Executive Committee agreed that the Commission should consider, in the first place, whether there was need for continuing to develop a Codex Standard for Soy Sauce. If the answer to this question was affirmative, then the subsequent question on whether to entrust its elaboration to the Codex Committee on Cereals, Pulses and Legumes should be addressed. The Committee noted that possible options included discontinuation of this work within Codex as well as finalization of the draft standard as a regional standard.

8. The Executive Committee decided to consider this matter at its 56<sup>th</sup> Session of the Committee in the framework of the Critical Review Process. The recommendation of the Executive Committee would be then put forward to the 28<sup>th</sup> Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission for final decision. In order to facilitate the discussion at the next session of the Committee, it was agreed that a Circular Letter be issued to seek the views of Codex Members and Observers on the need for the standardization of this product within Codex.

**REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON THE NEED FOR A CODEX STANDARD FOR SOY SAUCE**

9. In submitting comments, Codex Members and Observers should indicate which of the options listed below would be the preferred approach regarding the standardization of soy sauce. Besides, the comments could usefully include an assessment against the *Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities* (see Annex).

- (1) to discontinue work on the standardization of soy sauce;
- (2) to continue work on the standardization of soy sauce as:
  - (a) a regional standard, or
  - (b) an international standard.

10. Codex Members and Observers are invited to comment on the need for a Codex Standard for Soy Sauce as above. The comments submitted will be presented to the 56<sup>th</sup> Session of the Executive Committee and to the 28<sup>th</sup> Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission to provide concrete guidance, in view of the comments presented and the recommendation of the CCEXEC, as to how to proceed further with the development of the Standard. Considering the time available until the next sessions of the Executive Committee and the Commission (July 2005), Codex Members and Observers are invited to send their comments by **30 April 2005** as indicated on the cover page.

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<sup>2</sup> ALINORM 05/28/3, paras. 53 - 56

<sup>3</sup> ALINORM 04/27/41, paras 95 - 97.

**ANNEX****CODEX ALIMENTARIUS PROCEDURAL MANUAL****CRITERIA FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF WORK PRIORITIES**

When a Codex Committee proposes to elaborate a standard, code of practice or related text within its terms of reference, it should first consider the priorities established by the Commission in the Medium-Term Plan of Work, any specific relevant strategic project currently being undertaken by the Commission and the prospect of completing the work within a reasonable period of time. It should also assess the proposal against the criteria set out below.

If the proposal falls in an area outside the Committee's terms of reference the proposal should be reported to the Commission in writing together with proposals for such amendments to the Committee's terms of reference as may be required.

**Criteria****Criteria applicable to commodities**

- (a) Consumer protection from the point of view of health and fraudulent practices.
- (b) Volume of production and consumption in individual countries and volume and pattern of trade between countries.
- (c) Diversification of national legislations and apparent resultant or potential impediments to international trade.
- (d) International or regional market potential.
- (e) Amenability of the commodity to standardization.
- (f) Coverage of the main consumer protection and trade issues by existing or proposed general standards.
- (g) Number of commodities which would need separate standards indicating whether raw, semi processed or processed.
- (h) Work already undertaken by other international organizations in this field.